

G.O.P. SCRAMBLES
TO PUSH TAX BILL
THROUGH SENATE

A RUSH TO MAKE DEALS

Passage Is Expected for
Broadest Overhaul in
Generations

This article is by Jim Tankersley, Thomas Kaplan and Alan Rappeport.

WASHINGTON — The Senate appeared on the cusp of passing the most sweeping tax rewrite in generations, with Republicans lining up to approve an overhaul that will touch almost every corner of the United States economy, affecting families, small business owners and multinational corporations, with the biggest benefits flowing to the highest-earning Americans.

Senate leaders were still rewriting parts of the bill late Friday, and lawmakers received a nearly 500-page bill containing significant changes just hours before a planned vote. The last-minute revisions prompted an outcry from Democrats, who said it was impossible — and irresponsible — for lawmakers to read, digest and vote on a significant piece of legislation in such a short period of time. Several took to social media to attack their Republican colleagues.

Senator Jon Tester, Democrat of Montana, called it “Washington D.C. at its worst” in a video in which he held up a page of the bill with handwritten changes scribbled in the margins.

“This is unbelievable, we’re doing massive tax reform on an absolute incredible timeline,” he said. “This is going to affect everybody in this country.”

Senator Claire McCaskill, Democrat of Missouri, posted a list of amendments to the bill on her Twitter account and cried foul over the fact that she got it from a lobbyist, not from her colleagues across the aisle.

“None of us have seen this list,

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Groups making estimates	Estimated cost of Senate tax plan	Cost including estimated effect of economic growth
Joint Committee on Taxation	\$1.63 trillion	\$1 trillion
Penn Wharton Budget Model	\$1.64 trillion	\$1.39 trillion
Tax Foundation	\$1.78 trillion	\$516 billion

‘A Bad Joke’: Corruption Battle
Stalls in Mexico, Watchdogs Say

By AZAM AHMED

MEXICO CITY — Mexico’s landmark anti-corruption drive, inaugurated by President Enrique Peña Nieto under intense pressure to answer the scandals jolting his administration, is being blocked by the government’s refusal to cooperate on some of the biggest cases facing the nation, according to members of the commission coordinating the effort.

Attempts to look into the use of government surveillance technology against civilians, the embezzlement of tens of millions of dollars through public universities and allegations of widespread bribery to win construction contracts have all been thwarted, commission members say.

Marred by scandals that have embroiled his administration, his allies and even his own family, Mr. Peña Nieto agreed to the creation of a broad anti-corruption system last year that was enshrined in the Constitution, a watershed moment in Mexico.

Debt Concerns,
Often a Driver,
Take Back Seat

G.O.P. Puts a Tax Win
Ahead of Core Tenet

By BINYAMIN APPELBAUM
WASHINGTON — In 2009, almost every Republican in Congress opposed a \$787 billion stimulus plan in the midst of an economic crisis because they said it would cause a dangerous increase in the federal debt.

“Yesterday the Senate cast one of the most expensive votes in history,” Senator Mitch McConnell, the minority leader, said at the time. “Americans are wondering how we’re going to pay for all this.”

Nine years later, during one of the longest economic expansions in American history, almost every Republican in Congress — including Mr. McConnell, now the majority leader — is set to vote for a tax plan that is projected to cause an even larger increase in the federal debt.

Republicans got to that extraordinary point by a tangled path. First they argued that the tax cuts would stimulate the economy enough to pay for themselves, only to be confronted on Thursday with a report that said the cuts would add \$1 trillion to the deficit over a decade. That bad news led to last-minute convulsions and a frantic search for more revenue.

But in the end, it looked as though the political imperative to pass what would be the only major piece of legislation of President Trump’s first year, along with a near-religious Republican belief in tax cuts, would override their previous concerns about fiscal prudence.

All but one Republican senator, Bob Corker of Tennessee, appeared set to vote for the bill on Friday.

The House and the Senate would still have to reach final agreement on the details, and Mr. Trump would have to sign his name, but the Republican Party

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FLYNN PLEADS GUILTY; WILL AID INQUIRY



SAUL LOEB/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Michael T. Flynn leaving court on Friday after pleading guilty to lying to the F.B.I. about conversations with the Russian ambassador.

WHITE HOUSE MEMO

A Thunderclap Sneaks Up on Trump

By PETER BAKER and MAGGIE HABERMAN

WASHINGTON — At his Mar-a-Lago private club over the Thanksgiving weekend, President Trump appeared happy and relaxed, relieved to be away from the stresses of Washington. His mind was partly on the Russia investigation that had irritated him for months. But he insisted to friends that it would soon wrap up and clear him of wrongdoing.

A week later, the guilty plea of his former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn, seemed to shatter that hopeful prediction. The investigation hardly seems close to ending, and news that Mr. Flynn is cooperating with prosecutors sent shivers through Mr. Trump’s team. While the legal danger remains uncertain, the investigation, at the very least, has wrought grievous political damage to his presidency.

The fall of Mr. Flynn, who was once so close to Mr. Trump that he was considered a viable prospect to be his vice-presiden-

Investigation on Russia
Intrudes on a Day of
Legislative Promise

tial running mate, came on a day that should have been a moment of triumph for the president.

After months of stymied ambitions on Capitol Hill, he appeared to have secured enough votes to pass his tax cut plan in the Senate, advancing what, if it ultimately reaches his desk, will be his most far-reaching legislative accomplishment since he took office.

In the end, the tax plan may resonate more powerfully with the public than the legal woes of a former presidential aide; at least Mr. Trump’s team hopes so. But for the moment, at least, watching one of their own hauled before a judge dampened any celebration over developments in Congress. It raised uncomfortable questions about what Mr. Flynn might be telling the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller

III. And it could easily distract a president not exactly known for a disciplined political and policymaking operation.

“These kinds of threats to the presidency cast a pall over all other activities in a White House,” said former Representative Vic Fazio, Democrat of California. “In this administration, it may lead Trump to become more unhinged and even less focused on the pressing issues of the day.”

Still, former Representative Mickey Edwards, Republican of Oklahoma, said Mr. Trump’s unconventional political appeal might yet minimize the consequences that other presidents might have endured.

“In any normal White House, and with any normal basis for

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‘He’s Not Leaving’

The president rejected reports that he was planning to fire his secretary of state, saying, “We work well together.” Page A13.

A Plagiarism Case With Sex, Lies and Spyware

By ALEXANDRA ALTER

Emma Cline’s 2016 novel “The Girls” was, by any measure, a triumphant debut. The novel, which takes place in California in the 1960s and centers on a teenage girl who falls into a Charles Manson-like cult, sold to Random House for seven figures in a three-book deal, and spent three months on the New York Times best-seller list. Ms. Cline, who was 27 when the novel came out, was celebrated as a major new talent.

But for the last two years, her success has been overshadowed, in private, by legal threats levied against her by a former boyfriend, Chaz Reetz-Laiolo.

This week, that long simmering dispute became glaringly public, when Ms. Cline and Mr. Reetz-Laiolo filed dueling lawsuits in federal court in San Francisco. In his complaint, Mr. Reetz-Laiolo, who is also a writer, claims that Ms. Cline plagiarized phrases and scene structures from him that appear in “The Girls,” and used spyware to read his email and other personal documents. Ms. Cline’s



NATHAN BAJAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Emma Cline’s debut novel “The Girls” was a best seller in 2016.

publisher and Scott Rudin Productions, which optioned the screen rights to “The Girls,” are also named in the suit, which seeks unspecified damages.

Ms. Cline’s countersuit calls the claims “ludicrous,” and says that the suit was motivated by jealousy, and marks the culmination

of Mr. Reetz-Laiolo’s continuing effort to threaten and intimidate her into paying him a large sum of money.

Random House issued a statement in support of Ms. Cline, saying that “there is no basis to the

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INTERNATIONAL A4-8

Pondering Motives in Egypt

Residents in Sinai said religious tensions and revenge were probably behind the deadliest attack in modern Egyptian history last week.

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U.S. Embassy to Stay in Tel Aviv

President Trump also plans to become the first president to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

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NATIONAL A9-16

A Heated Case in California

Even after the acquittal of an undocumented immigrant in a woman’s shooting death, officials are loath to change the state’s sanctuary policies.

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Moore Finds Rival From Afar

As he fights claims of misconduct, Roy S. Moore has vilified the lawyer representing an accuser.

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A Steakhouse’s Sizzling Past

A restaurateur has dug into the history of Gallaghers, once a hangout for gangsters and Broadway stars.

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SPORTSSATURDAY D1-6

New Manager for Yankees

The Yankees were said to have picked Aaron Boone, an ESPN broadcaster who as a player hit an unforgettable playoff home run for the club.

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32 Teams and One Goal

The draw for the 2018 World Cup sorts the field of 32 countries into eight first-round groups. A primer.

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BUSINESS DAY B1-6

Defensive Over Lauer Firing

Two NBC News executives took steps to quell in-house suspicions over their handling of the “Today” host.

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Rural China Catches Up

New roads and farming changes have overlooked areas ready to grow.

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Museum Gifts and Opioids

Should institutions vet donors? A contemporary case study.

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EDITORIAL, OP-ED A22-23

Ehud Barak

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THIS WEEKEND

